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DIRECTORATE OF
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(Record Center)

Central Intelligence Bulletin



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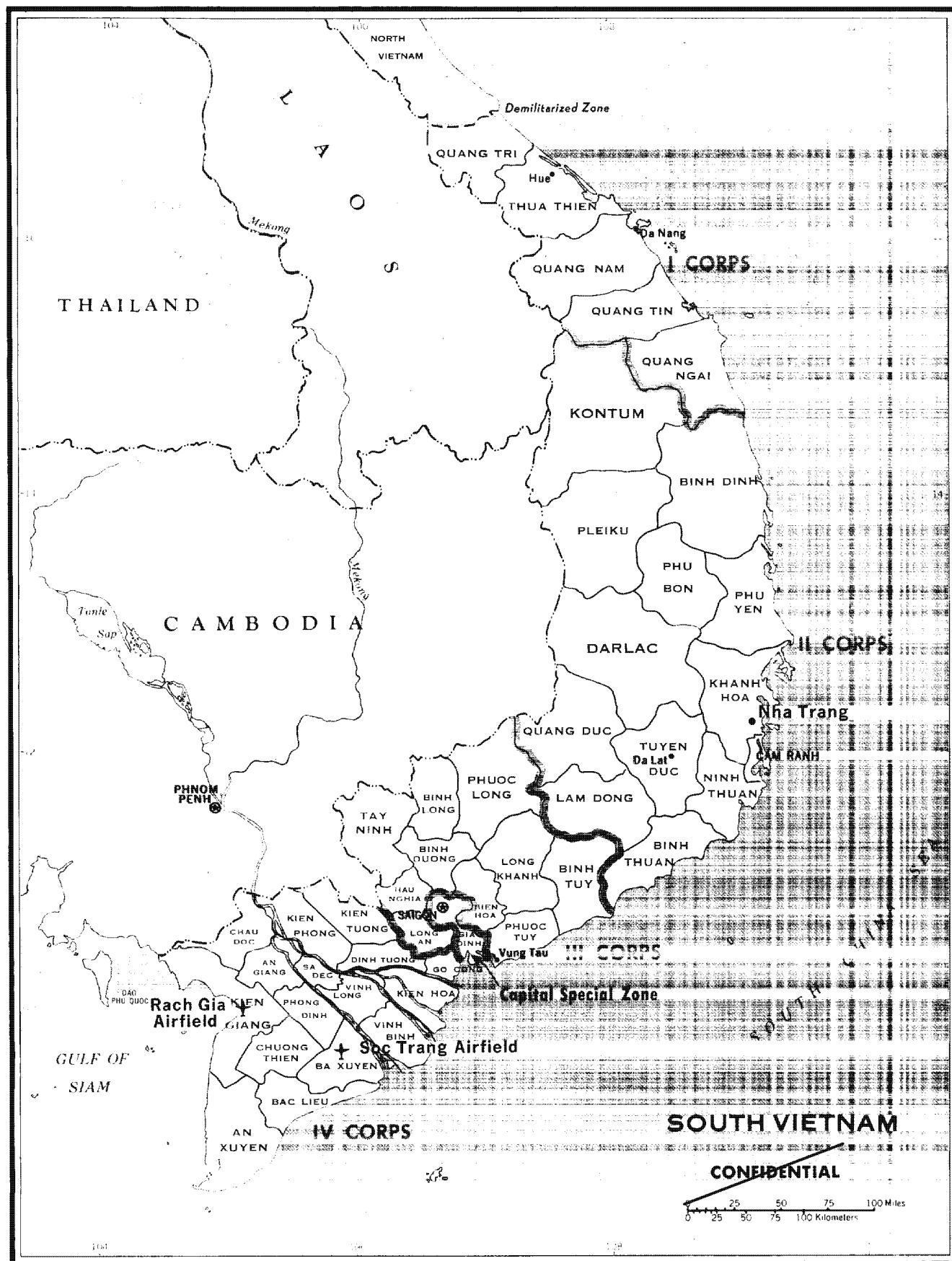
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*South Vietnam: Only small-scale engagements between allied and Communist forces have been reported in the past several days.

One of these limited enemy actions included mortar attacks on two US - South Vietnamese airbases in the delta on 28 November. During the period 25-26 November, the Communists leveled 14 mortar attacks on allied positions in the delta provinces; they also shelled two Special Forces camps, the US base at Nha Trang and several US positions in the central highlands.

According to late information, a South Vietnamese outpost and district headquarters at Bu Dop in Phuoc Long Province in northern III corps were attacked today. US and South Vietnamese forces supported by tactical air strikes repulsed the attack after several hours. Enemy losses were 31 killed, while the South Vietnamese lost 15 killed and 62 wounded. No US losses were reported.

Police Director Loan, who submitted his resignation late last week, said on 27 November that he had agreed to stay at his post for at least two or three more months. This change apparently was prompted by Vice President Ky, who reportedly told Loan that his resignation could not be accepted because it would complicate the organization of the government. Ky promised to review Loan's request in a few months.

Loan's reason for resigning, in addition to a stomach ailment, was his conviction that he would be at odds with important personalities and embarrass the new government.

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Cambodia: Prince Sihanouk is voicing alarm that the war in South Vietnam may soon be extended into Cambodia.

Sihanouk told a press conference in Phnom Penh on 26 November that the recent spate of US press reports on Vietnamese Communist activities in Cambodia are a form of pressure on the US government to extend the war. He praised President Johnson for exercising restraint but went on to warn the Cambodian people to be prepared for a "struggle to the death against the Americans." Sihanouk reiterated that any US move across the border would force Cambodia to fight alongside the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese.

Sihanouk also issued standard denials that there are permanent Communist facilities located on Cambodian territory, although he acknowledged that Communist units pass through isolated border areas. Sihanouk also admitted that Cambodia had made a "verbal agreement" to sell rice and other nonmilitary goods to the Viet Cong.

Sihanouk's statements over the past week indicate that he intends to continue to portray Cambodia as the innocent victim of circumstances beyond its control. He has underlined this position by pointed references to the inability of the allied forces to control the South Vietnamese side of the border. At the same time, he has sought to demonstrate his good faith by renewing a standing request for an expanded International Control Commission role with permanent sites in border areas.

There have been recurring reports that leading Cambodian civilian and military leaders are urging Sihanouk to follow a more "neutral" course but thus far no indications that he intends to bring increased pressure to bear on the Vietnamese Communists to limit their presence in Cambodia.

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Laos: There are new signs that junior officers are dissatisfied with the military leadership in Vientiane.

A number of colonels in the Royal Armed Forces have been circulating a petition calling for the creation of two new posts in the cabinet. These would be filled by military men, and ostensibly designed to increase coordination between military and civilian elements in the government. The military leadership has been pushing for a greater voice in cabinet affairs for some time.

The real purpose of the petition, however, may be to pave the way for a shake-up in the top leadership of the armed forces. [redacted]

[redacted] the colonels behind the petition are suggesting that the new posts be filled by Commander-in-Chief Ouan and Chief of Staff Kouprasith. The colonels are apparently arguing that with Ouan and Kouprasith kicked upstairs, de facto control of the armed forces will fall to General Phasouk, a vigorous and popular regional commander in southern Laos.

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The petition has received support from a substantial number of junior officers who have been disgruntled over [redacted] of Ouan and Kouprasith and the way [redacted] they have been prosecuting the war against the Pathet Lao. Prime Minister Souvanna probably will oppose additions to the cabinet and it is not clear how far the colonels will press their case.

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At a minimum, the petition will probably revive quiescent political infighting in Vientiane. [redacted]

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